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To: Federal Communications Commission

Re: RM-10805

Dear FCC,

I advocate keeping and strengthening the Morse code requirement as part of the testing procedures for ham radio licensing. There are many reasons for doing so and I would like to point out a few to you.

An Amateur Radio license is not just a permit to be involved in a “hobby”. Amateur radio license holders have a responsibility to (1) advance the art of communications (2) advance the technology of radio and electronics and (3) provide a pool of operators that can come to the forefront in times of emergencies. Each licensed amateur must in some way fulfill one or more of these things. Here is why the Morse code is important to the fulfillment of those goals:

Amateur radio is supposed to advance technology by allowing us to experiment with new ideas in the area of radio and electronics. Getting new operators on CW allows them to build their own equipment at very little cost. For \$30 you can build a crystal controlled 40 or 20 meter transceiver. And with some training and desire, the new ham can understand how the circuit in that small rig is working. Not so with other rigs. CW is clearly the best way to get individuals that have low income into the hobby and interested in electronics.

CW still gets through when other modes cannot. It is true that some digital modes are very good at pulling signals through that you can hardly hear. But CW has always been fabulous at getting through in poor conditions. And you only need simple equipment for CW. For digital modes, special equipment, including computers is needed. For a real worldwide emergency you are probably not going to have all the extra equipment or computers. CW will still get through, but only if you have the operators to do so.

CW operators are without question the most disciplined and honorable of all amateur radio operators. As a group there just is no comparison between those that operate just phone and those that operate CW. Listen to any contest or DX pileup or rag chew. Listen any time of the day on any band. When it comes to advancing the art of “communications” CW operators “get it”. I think this has happened because those that become proficient at CW work hard to become good at it and become proud of their skills. A person only values what he has earned and if you get your ham license because you simply memorized questions and answers that are published in advance you have no respect for the license on your wall. The Morse requirement requires that the license be “earned” and it becomes something that you respect.

Last but not least, the CW requirement makes ham radio a brotherhood. It is a bond that we all have and that bond is one of the main reasons that people wish to become involved with the hobby.

Ham Radio now has two tests that must be passed: (1) the written exams for which all the questions and answers are published in advance and (2) the code tests. People taking the exams are memorizing the test questions and answers leaving the only real test the CW test. I am not in favor of this proposal. RM-10811 is a far superior proposal.

Respectfully,

Joseph M. Wade – W6YR